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Meeting of NPA 6, Aiken Hall, Champlain College, Sept. 1, 2016

Approximately 26 people in attendance plus speakers and NPA steering committee.
Steering Committee member present: Clare Wool and Charles Simpson.

Minutes:

1. Meeting began at 7:04; Clare Wool presented the agenda for approval.
2. Stephanie Seguino and Miriam Stoll from the School Board gave an up-date.
Summer construction on various buildings, including Edmunds School, is complete. Burlington High School is poised for positive change. Partnership for Change members have had their program, Architecture for Equity, funded for the coming year. The district audit of facilities last year and determined that \$65 million is needed to correct problems, including deferred maintenance. The Board will be considering two options. 1) Address and correct all deferred maintenance problems but not build a new high school. 2) Do K-12 repairs and analyze the need for a new high school over this school year. Moving ahead with repairs will require asking voters to approve a \$19 million bond issue. This translates into an additional tax burden for the average home owner of \$91 per month. The bonding vote could come in November or March. After fact-finding, contract negotiations with the teachers' union will resume on 9/12. Question (Q): Does the state participate in such expenses? Answer (A) No. School repair issues are a national problem estimated at \$4 billion; this isn't due to our neglect here. Q. For how long is the bond? A. 10 years. Q. Will it result in improvements such as energy efficiency or just a return us to the status quo? A. We don't want just a patch-up. \$10 million goes to put our schools in compliance with ADA. Q. Will you give equal weight to rehab as well as a new high school building? A. The size of the HS is adequate, so yes, though ADA compliance is an issue. Keeping the present building is not off the table.
3. Sandy Yusen and a Champlain College Student Government rep., Gerard --?, spoke. CC Student Government will have a rep. at NPA 6 this year as part of their community outreach effort. A new Women and Gender Studies Center has opened on campus. A faculty art exhibition has opened in the college gallery. Yusen thanked the community for bearing with the college during "move-in weekend". This year they welcomed the largest college class yet and CC will be housing some upper class students in three off-campus facilities, 287 College St.; Bayberry Place, and Spinner Place, Winooski. There will be staff in each location. Eagles Landing is scheduled to be open to students in the fall of 2018. The last campus building project in the master plan, Information Technology Science, is in the planning stage. ITS programs will include cyber security. Some landscape construction is being completed. As a safety and diversity move, the college is painting the crosswalk at So. Willard near Maple in a rainbow pattern. Enhanced crosswalk visibility is being studied for So. Willard crossings. Q. Students are hard to see until they are in the street. A. We are looking into a blinker system. We know we need additional lighting there. Q. We need lighting that covers the middle of the street, not so much a blinker. A. We are looking into this. There will be a raised portion of the crosswalk. Q. Who pays for it? A. The city, we

expect. This is an open conversation. Q. Why the delay at Eagles Landing? A. We are still negotiating with the City for the Brown's Court property. Q. What are your student numbers? A. 2100 now, which is generally even with figures for the past five years. Others students are abroad. Of the 2100, 632 are first-year students. Check for our welcoming event information on the table.

4. Gail Shampnois and Joe Speidel represented UVM. New construction underway will add 300 beds to the previous number on campus. These dorms will open in Fall 2017. The STEM building will open later. The new class has higher than pervious GPA and SAT scores. More Vermont high school grads are attending with free tuition than perviously. We are working with our city counselors, the police dept., and code enforcement to address problem incidents off campus. We are funding police officers to be in the neighborhoods on weekends, including on So. Prospect. We will be mapping incidents so as to take pro-active initiatives. The trends in this area are positive. Thanks for bearing with us during move-in. We are informing all students about the behavior that is expected of them in the community, and will be distributing 500 information and treat bags Sept. 10. We've worked with Councilor Karen Paul on this effort to raise awareness. Call Gail's office with any problems you experience in this regard. We also are running late night student shuttles. (Karen Paul): noise complaints have fallen sharply, sometimes being resolved in 24 hours with the help of the code enforcement officer. Q. Don't you have space to build dorms on the Trinity Campus? A. Yes. We are looking at that. That might need a zoning change "down the line". Q. I want to report that the Wellness Campus is effective. A. Yes, it now is oversubscribed.
5. Ann Taylor, Don Sinex, and Jesse Beck, President of Freeman French Freeman, Inc., presented information on the proposed Burlington Town Center. Taylor said Burlington is a great place to live and the project won't injure it. Business supports it. Sinex said he purchased the property 3 years ago and for the past 2 years has worked with the mayor, Council, Planning and Zoning, and the Planning Commission to refine the plan. BTC is 40 year old and sits on 5 acres or 215,000 sq. feet of land. Physical retail is in a state of flux currently and each year appears to be declining, hence the problems cited by Macy's Corp closing some stores. If they close here, you'll know as soon as I will. I hope not. The site is perfect for mixed use, stacked vertically. This cuts down on auto trips. Our two years of work has gotten us a good design. (At this point he showed slides of the site and the proposed buildings.) These will be true public streets with access to all vehicles, including fire trucks, and pedestrians and bikes. Slopes won't be over 4.5 degrees and so ADA compliant. They aren't perfect. There is a 20 foot drop between Cherry and Bank Streets and 20 feet between Church and Pine. The project will revitalize the downtown, according to an economic impact study done for us by a UVM professor, generating 900 temporary and 1200 permanent jobs. There will be \$200 million of additional economic activity surrounding the mall, including rebuilding on Bank Street. Now there is no storm water management at all. We will improve this, catching, storing, and slowly releasing water to reduce impact on the city's systems. We are working with DPW on this, and storage will be on the 5th floor. Both the streets and the observation deck will be public amenities. There is a problem. We can get clearance of 13'6" for each street with the exception of the ramp under the Free Press Building,

which is 12'. Our largest fire truck is 12' If we were to increase the slope to lower the ramp, we'd increase the incline and create problems as the road meets the Macy's entrance. They'd need steps. So Macy's isn't pleased. But the roads will be 60' wide. Yes, they won't be perfect in that they won't align with the streets they connect with. We can't move the Free Press building. And the NBT Bank building is also in the way. We still aren't done with our planning process and need to meet with DRB and the Conservation Board. They wanted us to make the garage disappear. It is self-ventilating and 50% open, using screens with holes. From the sidewalk, you can't see through the screens but you could face-on. From the street you won't see car lights or cars. The buildings are well-designed with setbacks so the pedestrian experience from the street is such that you won't feel the height. A bird will see it, but not a pedestrian. Our goal is for the pedestrian to feel the street vitality, not the height. We think we have the right balance. 50,000 feet of the plot are streets, deeded to the city. Yes, we can ask to close them for events, just as any city street could be closed through the proper procedure for a proper purpose. This is a large space for community functions, an outdoor plaza. Parking: We wanted underground but the cost is \$75 million not the \$25 million we'll pay for above-ground parking. We can't pay for it. It requires a 45 foot hole over 125,000 sq. ft., and excavation would take 9 months and many trucks coming and going. Downtown soil is often contaminated so disposal could add \$100 a cubic yard for 200,000 yards. It's impossible. Height? You won't feel it. Inclusionary Zoning? We have full IZ compliance that will never go away, set at 60% of median income. Shops, "most of the shops" will be entered from the street. We may need a clinic, a pet shop, a pre-school; it is hard to say at this point. TIF's? I'm giving up property. I can't build the roads. If the public wants them, they should pay. I've been told that Farrell's project has the developer building the streets. But he's getting \$2 million from the city (for the park) and money is fungible. He'll use that to build the streets. So its the same. TIF's don't impact your tax bill. We use 75% of the increased tax generated to pay the bond, but 25% goes to the city. "This is my money, not the city's." It doesn't impact your tax bill. Without the project there's no increase so you can't say you could use the money for some other expense. You'll get to vote on the TIF. The public gets the streets. (Jesse Beck): We are also doing the new City Market and we did the garages at the airport and the hospital. The 160ft. height is only on half of the plot. Downtown is ready for this. We have setbacks after the 5th story. Q. Don't you have a wall on Cherry Street unlike the setbacks on Church Street? A. Setbacks vary with the city requirements. They are 60ft. on Church Street after 45 ft. The 45ft height gives Church St. a potential uniform wall on the west side. Planning and Zoning wanted this increase to 45 foot height to make it even. Q. Won't there be shading on the Cherry Street park? Can't you space out the towers more to minimize that? A. We are looking at that. New streets will also add street level sun. Check the CEDO website for particulars on setbacks. Q. Can you lower the height? The square feet on the top of the towers is only 8000 ft each or a total of 24,000 sq. ft. With 325,000 sq. ft. for the garage, putting it underground would let you lower the towers. It is hard to see that all 200,000 cubic yards of soil would be contaminated. Say half was. That would make removal and disposal cost \$60 million more for a project with underground parking. A. (Beck) At BTV the cost for above ground parking was 10,000-15,000 a space; at the hospital it was 42,000 a space.

(Sinex): \$21,000 above ground and \$55,000 below at present. We initially wanted it underground but the project can't sustain it financially. We wouldn't get the financing. Each garage floor is 10 ft. Q. Can't you reduce the number of parking spaces, put parking where the concourse presently is, sell some spaces, use shared space as per the downtown parking plan, and then you'd have 325,000 more square feet of space to rent. A. We looked at all those options. We can't get it to work. Our garage is as small as possible given the demand of our mix. Retail wants spaces We can't reduce the number of spaces without reducing the size of the project. Our UVM Medical tenants have 500 employees and want 500 spaces. We are trying to shift some of this to adjacent lots. Apartments want one space each. Then there's additional office space, then retail. Yes, we need smart parking management. Champlain College students won't be allowed to park downtown so that saves 80 spaces. We've studied this. You have peak demand at 1200 spaces and you have 925 slots. Valet parking can gain you 225 spaces. You build to 85% of the peak demand so you don't have unused spaces most of the year. We are stuck. Q. If you presume the soil is contaminated, won't rebuilding the streets involve removal of contaminated soil, and thus the TIF won't be sufficient? A. We will be adding soil to the streets, not removing it, We'll add 10,000 cu. yds.

6. Because of the late hour, Councilor Paul ceded her time and will report in October and we lacked time for "member items/open forum."
7. Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Charles Simpson